

'Political Correctness' Battles Waged on Campuses

by Frances Callahan

Until President George Bush, in his address to the graduating class of the University of Michigan, denounced "Political Correctness" as having gone too far, the war had been quietly raging on college campuses. Now that it is out in the open, advocates for both sides are speaking out.

"Political Correctness," known as PC, requires avoiding terminology that will offend others, particularly special-interest groups. For instance, General Norman Schwarzkopf spoke disparagingly of *military fairies* who wanted to negotiate rather than go to war. Gay-rights groups complained about his use of the word *fairy*, so he was not "politically correct."

Opponents of PC insist on the Freedom of Speech guaranteed them by the Constitution. They argue that the Constitution does not guarantee anyone the right not to be offended. According to *Time's* William A. Henry III, dozens of universities have responded to the controversy by introducing tough new codes prohibiting speech that leads to a "demeaning atmosphere," and some

have suspended students for using epithets toward women, minorities, blacks, and homosexuals. At Brown University, a student was expelled for violating the PC code in a drunken wee-hours racist tirade.

Sensitivity training sessions are given for staff and teachers to satisfy special interests. But many students feel squelched by the inability to ask legitimate questions of academic or personal interest. "They are not alone," said Leon Botstein, president of New York's Bard College. "Nobody wants to listen to the other side. On some campuses, there is a culture of forbidden questions."

Pressure from special-interest groups has also affected course content and curricula. Administrators are under political pressure to supplant traditional liberal arts studies with more politically correct courses. Some PC-minded tenured professors are eagerly devising courses geared to special-interest groups. Others sadly oppose replacement of traditional curriculums with courses about race and gender issues.

The dissenting educators have formed the National Association of

Scholars to deal with these issues, seeking to maintain the standards of excellence that have made U.S. universities the world's envy. Christina Sommers and other faculty members of Clark University were outraged at the University's attempt to infringe on their academic freedom by monitoring their course content for "pluralistic views." She and other N.A.S. members worry about "an environment of intimidation. It's the opposite of what a university should be."

America's ultimate response to controversy - a comic strip - is syndicated to 200+ college newspapers by cartoonist Jeff Shesol. His character, called Politically Correct Person, is a Superman-type caped vigilante who zealously seeks out, defines, and rebukes insensitivity.

These are the excesses of which George Bush spoke. But a recent survey by the American Council on Education has found that only 10% of U.S. colleges and universities experienced PC controversy about course content, lectures, or speeches. Among all the schools surveyed, 35% reported incidents of discriminatory harassment.

According to Earnest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, this "reflects a larger social problem" not related to education.

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

- JERRY GARCIA (49)
8/1/42
- RICK DERRINGER (44)
8/5/47
- THE EDGE/U2 (30)
8/8/61
- WHITNEY HOUSTON (28)
8/9/63
- ERIC CARMEN (42)
8/11/49
- MARK KNOPFLER (42)
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- DAN FOGELBERG (40)
8/13/51
- DAVID CROSBY (50)
8/14/41
- MADONNA (32)
8/16/59
- BELINDA CARLISLE(33)
8/17/58
- GINGER BAKER (52)
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- ROBERT PLANT (43)
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- JOHN LEE HOOKER (74)
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- GENE SIMMONS (42)
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- MICHAEL JACKSON (33)
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- VAN MORRISON (46)
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'Delco Funnies' Comics Continue; Brad Lowery to Appear in Sept.

Brad Lowery can make you laugh in more ways than one. Whether it is straight stand-up, off-beat frenetic mannerisms, or some wild audience participation, Brad keeps the crowd involved and laughing. He will be appearing at Penn State Delco on Tuesday, September 4, at 12:30 PM in the Main Lounge as part of the Delco Funnies series sponsored by the Student Activities Committee.

Lowery's ability to get an audience's energy flowing has made him a logical choice to open for such acts as Tower of Power, Rebbie Jackson, Bob Nelson, and Sinbad. He has appeared on HBO's "Inside the NFL," NBC's "Showtime at the Apollo," and several cable TV projects.

In conjunction with Hysterix Comedy Club, Brad has been host to "Charity Begins at Home," founded by Billy Joel and sponsored by New York radio station WBAB. He participates annually in this event, which is just one of the many charities Brad is involved with.

A long-time favorite on the club circuit, Brad has enjoyed his recent exposure in the college market and is looking forward to expanding his horizons in this growing outlet for comedy. He was chosen to showcase for the 1990 NACA New England, Great Lakes, Heart of America, and Illinois/Indiana Regional Conventions, which should expedite this process.

His September 4 show at Delco is free and open to all members of the campus who enjoy good comedy.

